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THIRTY-FIFTH STUDY.—REIGNS OF MANASSEH, AMON, AND JOSIAH.

[The material of this "study" is furnished by Professor Beecher. It is edited by Professor Harper.]

BIBLICAL LESSON AND SPECIAL TOPICS.

Prepare for recitation 2 Kgs. 21:23:30; 2 Chron. 33:35, with parallel passages, in the order of the following topics:

1. **The Chronology.** Verify the following arithmetical statements: (1) The fourth year of Jehoiakim being 604 B. C. (see *Jer. 25:1*, etc., and *O. T. STUDENT* for March, 1888, p. 236, III., first section), the first year of Jehoiakim was 607 B. C. (2) The thirty-one years of Josiah, 2 Kgs. 22:1, etc., were B. C. 638-608. (3) The two years of Amon, 2 Kgs. 21:19, etc., were probably 640 and 639 B. C. (4) The fifty-five years of Manasseh, 2 Kgs. 21:1, etc., were probably 695-641 B. C.*
2. **Manasseh.** (1) 2 Kgs. 21:1, his accession and length of reign. (2) His guilt: (a) 2 Kgs. 21:2-7, 16; 2 Chron. 33:2-7, 19, the various sins attributed to him; (b) vs. 7-9 in Kings and Chronicles, an especially aggravating circumstance; (c) 2 Kgs. 21:9-15, Jehovah's warnings; (d) 2 Chron. 33:10, how these were received. (3) 2 Chron. 33:11, 12, his punishment. (4) 2 Chron. 33:12, 13, 18, 19, 23, his repentance. (5) 2 Chron. 33:14-17, and the references just given, his public reformation. (6) 2 Kgs. 21:17, 18, his death. (7) 2 Kgs. 21:17; 2 Chron. 33:18, 19, sources of the history. (8) Is the account of (3), (4), and (5) discredited by the silence of the Book of Kings on these topics? Is it discredited by the fact that it represents an Assyrian king as taking Manasseh to Babylon? (9) Read "the prayer of Manasses," as found in the Apocrypha, and decide whether it is true to the historical situation.
3. **Contemporary History.** During Manasseh's reign, the Assyrian kings were, counting from the "first year" of each: Sennacherib, B. C. 704-681, Esarhaddon, 680-668, Assurbanipal (Sardanapalus), 667 to some unknown date; his "first year" as king of Babylon was 647 B. C. (1) Look up what the Bible says of Esarhaddon, 2 Kgs. 19:37; Isa. 37:38; Ez. 4:2; probably Ez. 4:10; possibly parts of 2 Kgs. 17. (2) Look up, in the sources at your command, the Assyrian accounts of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, especially their military expeditions and other operations in the vicinity of Palestine (Esarhaddon mentions Manasseh as one of his tributaries). (3) Compare these accounts with the story of Sardanapalus handed down through Greek sources—with Lord Byron's drama of that title, for example. (4) What do you say to the conjecture that Manasseh was taken to Babylon about 648 B. C., while Assurbanipal was engaged in the conquest of Babylon, and released at some time after the conquest was completed? (5) Look up three important events in Greek history, and three in Roman history, that occurred during the reign of Manasseh.
4. **Amon.** (1) 2 Kgs. 21:18-26; 2 Chron. 33:20-25, the account of his reign. (2) How much stress do these accounts lay on the idea that Amon reversed his father's efforts at reform? In answer to this, compare, item by item,

* These numbers vary by either two or three, in each case, from those found in the margins of most marginal Bibles. In the instances where the difference is two, it is explained in the STUDENT, p. 236; where there is an additional year of difference, it is due to a different method of counting the years.

the accounts of the following four things: (a) The idolatrous institutions established by Manasseh, 2 Kgs. 21:1-13; 2 Chron. 33:1-9,15,19; (b) his restoration of Jehovah's worship, 2 Chron. 33:15-17; (c) Amon's practising the same sorts of idolatry that his father had practised, 2 Kgs. 21:20-22; 2 Chron. 33:22,23; (d) the idolatrous institutions that were still in existence as late as the twelfth and the eighteenth years of Josiah, 2 Chron. 34:3,4,7; 2 Kgs. 23:4-20,24. Is there reason for doubting that the temple worship of Jehovah was maintained in Amon's time? 2 Chron. 33:16.

5. **References in the Prophets to the Reigns of Manasseh and Amon.** (1) Manasseh's shedding innocent blood, Jer. 15:4; 2:30,34, etc.; perhaps Isa. 1:15, etc. (2) To Manasseh's reform, followed by the relapse under Amon, perhaps Jer. 3:10 and context, and Zeph. 1:4-6, with many like passages in Zephaniah and the early parts of Jeremiah.
6. **Josiah.** (1) General statements, 2 Kgs. 22:1,2; 2 Chron. 34:1,2. (2) The reforms in his eighth and twelfth years, 2 Chron. 34:3-7. (3) The prophesying of Zephaniah, Zeph. 1:1 and the whole book (but other opinions date the book later in Josiah's reign). (4) Earlier prophecies of Jeremiah, Jer. 1:2; 25:3; 1:4-3:5; perhaps 3:6-6:30. (5) The reformation of Josiah's eighteenth year: (a) temple repairs, 2 Kgs. 22:3-7; 2 Chron. 34:8-13; (b) finding the book of the law, 2 Kgs. 22:8; 2 Chron. 34:14,15; (c) reading in it before the king, 2 Kgs. 22:9-11; 2 Chron. 34:16-19; (d) the prophecy of Huldah, 2 Kgs. 22:12-20; 2 Chron. 34:20-28; (e) the public reading and accepting of the Book of the Covenant, 2 Kgs. 23:1-3; 2 Chron. 34:29-32; (f) subsequent iconoclastic operations, 2 Kgs. 23:4-20,24,25; 2 Chron. 34:33; (g) Josiah's passover, 2 Kgs. 23:21-23; 2 Chron. 35:1-19; (h) concluding events, and literature, 2 Kgs. 23:26-30; 2 Chron. 35:20-27.
7. **Mention of the Times of Josiah in the Prophets.** In Zephaniah, Jer. 1-6, and Habakkuk, look for allusions to the history of the times of Josiah, as distinguished from allusions to the previous history.
8. **Contemporaneous History.** From the best accessible sources, look up the history of Egypt, during the time of the reign of Josiah; the history of the great Scythian invasion, mentioned by Herodotus; the history of the downfall of Nineveh, and the rise of the kingdom of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon; in all these, remember that the dates, and often the events themselves, are only conjectural. Look up a few contemporary events in Greek and Roman history.
9. **The Great Pentateuchal Questions connected with the Time of Josiah.** (1) How extensive was the "Book of the Covenant" read before the congregation, 2 Kgs. 23:2; 2 Chron. 34:30? (2) Was this book the whole of the book of the law found in the temple, or only a section of it? (3) Was this copy of the book of the law the only copy then in existence, or did the interest it excited arise from its being a special copy of some sort? (4) Do the accounts represent this book of the law as then newly written, or as ancient? (5) What evidence can you find as to the extent of the book of the law? (a) was it merely the legislative part of Deuteronomy? (b) was it the Pentateuch? (c) was it the Pentateuch with additional sacred writings? (6) Whatever were its contents, does the account in Chronicles represent that Josiah had the legislation now found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers? (7) (a) Does the account in Kings confirm that in Chronicles, in this particular? (b) or contradict it? (c) or keep silence in the matter?